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DEPT FOR WHA/CEN AND PRM

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [HO](#)
SUBJECT: HONDURAS: CARIBBEAN MASS MIGRATION CONTINGENCY
ASSESSMENT

REF: STATE 3429

Classified By: AMBASSADOR CHARLES FORD FOR REASONS 1.4(D)

¶1. (C) Honduras is likely to accept migrants from the Caribbean who have been interdicted by the United States, but based on the GOH's current policies it is very likely that any migrants temporarily settled in Honduras would not be detained or prevented from departing Honduras to seek entry into the United States. This is evident in the GOH's treatment of Cuban migrants who arrive via boats. The migrants are given an immigration document similar to a "Notice to Appear" and are then turned loose into Honduran society. Those Cuban migrants rarely stay much longer than necessary in Honduras. Given the lack of employment opportunities in Honduras as well as the very efficient human trafficking networks that exist here, any camp would be little more than a brief first stop on a migrant's trip to the United States.

¶2. (C) Per ref tel instructions, below is Post's assessment of Honduras's probable response to the questions:

- a. The GOH would likely establish a camp for Caribbean migrants but only if the USG offered to pay for its construction and ongoing expenses. Such a facility would likely be acceptable to the GOH only if it was presented to the Honduran public as a refugee facility. Any suggestion that it was a detention facility would be unacceptable.
- b. As long as the USG is footing the bill for such a camp, GOH would allow the construction of a facility whether the US is taking its share of migrants or not. However, given the bad press in the region associated with the facility at GTMO, it would be better not to refer to such a camp as a substitute for GTMO or that it will be operated similarly to GTMO.
- c. The GOH would be willing to accept migrants but only from fellow Spanish-speaking countries with a similar culture.
- d. The GOH's willingness to accept Cuban migrants is not dependent on whether Fidel or another leader is running Cuba. Honduras and Cuba are moving closer together and Cuba has a good image in Honduras due to its willingness to send doctors and teachers to help the Honduran poor.
- e. If the GOH agreed to accept Caribbean migrants on behalf of the USG, it is very likely that they would expect to be rewarded for their actions. The Temporary Protected Status (TPS) program which currently allows approximately 80,000 Hondurans to reside legally in the United States expires in July 2007. The GOH would likely seek renewal of that program for its citizens in return for complying with any USG requests to accept the Caribbean migrants.

f. It is unknown how large a camp the GOH would allow to be constructed, but a thousand migrants would probably be close to the maximum number permitted.

g. While the GOH would expect the USG to pay for the camp, it is unlikely they would allow the USG to actually run the camp due to ongoing sensitivities regarding Honduran sovereignty and the fear that the USG would construct a "permanent" military base to support the camp. The GOH cannot run its own prison system, so although they would want to run the migrant camp, the same problems that plague the federal penitentiaries such as lack of training, lack of funding, incompetence, and corruption would be duplicated at any camp. Such a camp would be more acceptable if it were operated by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) or similar international organization.

h. The GOH would allow the construction of a camp only with the understanding that it would be temporary and that arrangements would be made to eventually remove the migrants from Honduras to a permanent home in another country.

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